

## DANILO DONATI (ART DIRECTOR)



Three-time Academy Award-winner Danilo Donati was born in the small town of Luzzara on the River Po in Italy in 1926. He wanted to become a painter, but his training as a muralist and fresco painter in Florence was interrupted in 1955.

"It's only by chance that I haven't spent my life painting frescoes," Donati said. "One of Visconti's assistants committed suicide, and his producers were looking for someone to execute designs. They chose me, and I haven't stopped working since." Donati was indeed Italy's wizard of motion picture set and costume design. His lightning speed in coordinating massive productions is legendary, and his work has embraced theatre, television, opera and cabaret as well as film.

"For *Caligula*," he says, "I was involved for nearly a year in pre-production research and construction using the entire facilities of Rome's huge Dear Studios and the employment of hundreds of artisans." The result was the mile-long reconstruction of ancient Rome, including royal palaces and gardens, and the production of thousands of highly detailed and beautiful costumes for the large cast. "I gave *Caligula* an unprecedented look," said Donati, who was not usually loquacious about his work.

Donati was as inventive as he was prolific. He has been called on by virtually every great name among Italian stage and screen directors, from Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Franco Zeffirelli to Roberto Rossellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Luchino Visconti. In addition to his Academy Award-winning films – *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *Fellini's Casanova* (1976) – he designed sets for *Satyricon* (1969), *Fellini's Roma* (1972), *Amarcord* (1973), *The Decameron* (1971) and *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (1972). He has been chief art director for Italy's state-owned television network RAI. In theater, he has collaborated with Antonioni on *I Am a Camera*, and in opera, his productions have been memorable. His films following *Caligula* include *Hurricane* (1979), *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Red Sonja* (1985), *Fellini's Intervista* (1987), *Francesco* (1989) and *Life Is Beautiful* (1989). Donati passed away on December 1, 2001.